



Spiral

THE BONDS OF REASONING

5

Story by **Kyo Shirodaira**
Art by **Eita Mizuno**

THE
BONDS OF REASONING

Spiritual

5

STORY/KYO SHIRODAIRA ART/EITA MIZUNO



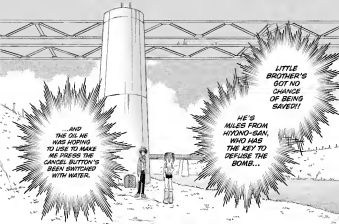


CONTENTS

CHAPTER TWENTY	The Only Clear Way to Do It	3
CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE	Goodnight, Sweetheart	37
CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO	Dry Eyes	73
CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE	Night Falls Again	99
CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR	Moving Target	125
CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE	Like a Swan	153

KEEP ON !

**CHAPTER TWENTY
THE ONLY CLEAR
WAY TO DO IT**



...AND
THE OIL HE
WAS HOPING
TO USE TO MAKE
ME PRESS THE
CANCEL BUTTON'S
BEEN SWITCHED
WITH WATER.

LITTLE
BROTHER'S
GOT NO
CHANCE
OF BEING
SAVED!!

HE'S
MILES FROM
HIYONO-GAN,
WHO HAS
THE KEY TO
DEFUSE THE
BOMB...



HE'S GOT
NO OTHER
CHANCES.

I'M NOT
DYING.



THERE'S
NO WAY
THAT CAN
HAPPEN!

AND
IN THESE
LAST THREE
MINUTES
...

...I'M GONNA
SHOW YOU A
MIRACLE.



GENE WARNING/FLAMMABLE

OH
(THINK)

THE
FIRST
IS...

THERE
ARE ONLY
TWO WAYS
TO SAVE
MYSELF.



I'M NOT
ABOUT TO
TAKE IT
EASY ON
YOU!

...FOR
YOU TO
PRESS
THE BUTTON
TO SWITCH
THE BOMB
OFF.

NO WAY
IS THAT
GOING TO
HAPPEN!!



THEN...

...WHY
NOT JUST
TOSS THE
SWITCH?



...OR BREAK
IT ON A ROCK
YOU KNOW?

YOU COULD
THROW IT IN
THE RIVER...





IF YOU
REALLY
DON'T
INTEND
TO SAVE
ME...

...THEN
WHY NOT
JUST GET
RID OF
IT?

AND YET
YOU STILL
GRIP IT SO
PRECIOUSLY.



YOU'RE
UNSURE...

...ABOUT
WHETHER
OR NOT IT'S
OKAY TO
KILL ME.





BUT ONE
THING I DO
KNOW...

...IS THAT
YOU'RE ALL
TESTING ME
FOR SOME-
THING.



...I
DON'T
EXACTLY
UNDER-
STAND
THEM.

YOUR
WISHES
...

...
AND MY
BROTHER'S...



LOOKS
LIKE
I'VE
DONE
OKAY
SO FAR.

BUT YOU'VE
FAILED THIS
TIME!



SO YOU
HAVE TO
DIE!!



IF I
PASS YOUR
TESTS, THEN
MY LIFE WILL
BE OF VALUE
TO YOU...

...
AND YOU
WON'T BE
ABLE TO
KILL ME.



...I'M SURE
YOU WOULD
THINK THAT
I DESERVED
TO DIE.

IF I WERE
TO BREAK
DOWN IN
TEARS AND
BEG FOR
MY LIFE
HERE...

...OR
BREAK OUT
IN A COLD
SWEAT...



YOU'RE
RIGHT.



...I DON'T
BELIEVE I'M
GOING TO
DIE.

BUT AS IT
STANDS...



...I'M NOT
GOING TO
TREMBLE
IN FEAR...
I'M JUST
GOING TO
BELIEVE.

I DON'T
HAVE ANY
LOGIC
BACKING
ME UP,
BUT...



**SO
WHAT
DO YOU
THINK?**

I THINK
IT WAS MY
BROTHER
WHO ONCE
SAID...

**AM I THE KIND
OF GUY WHO'S
JUST GONNA
DIE HERE?**

...**"THE
POWER TO
BELIEVE CAN
CHANGE EVEN
DESTINY."**



A character is seen from a distance on a large bridge or overpass. The bridge has a complex steel structure with many beams and supports. The character is standing on a walkway, looking towards the viewer. The background shows a cityscape with buildings and a cloudy sky.

I'M THE
ONE WITH
THE LITTLE
BROTHER'S
LIFE IN MY
HANDS.



A close-up shot of a person's hands holding a small, rectangular electronic device. The device has a circular button or screen in the center. The person is wearing a dark jacket over a light-colored shirt. The background is dark and out of focus.

BUT...

JUST AS
LONG AS I
DON'T PRESS
THIS SWITCH,
HE'S SURE
TO DIE.



A character with long hair is standing in a dark, possibly underground, setting. They are wearing a dark jacket and shorts. They are holding a small object in their hands, looking down at it with a concerned expression. The background is dark and indistinct.

.....



A close-up of a character's face. They have large, expressive eyes and are looking directly at the viewer. They are holding a small object in their hand. The background is dark and out of focus.

...I'M
THE ONE
SHAKING!?

...EVEN
SO, WHY IS
IT THAT...







I WONDER
ABOUT
THAT.



ARE YOU
SERIOUS?

THERE'S NO
WAY SOME-
THING SO
CONVENIENT
IS JUST GOING TO
HAPPEN.



...INEVITABLY
HAVE DEFECTS.

...AND
CHECKED
OVER
COUNTLESS
TIMES...

EVEN
MACHINES
THAT'VE
BEEN
CAREFULLY
MADE...



THERE'S ONLY A
ONE-IN-
A-MILLION
CHANCE
THAT IT'S
BUSTED.

I'M THE
ONE WHO
MADE THAT.



IS
HE FOR
REAL
...?

THIS
MIGHT
BE THE
ONE-IN-A-
MILLION
DID.



THEN
MINE
MIGHT
BE THE
BUSTED
ONE.



I HAVE THE
FEELING THAT
IF IT WERE
KIYOTAKA-
SAMA, HE'D
PRODUCE
JUST SUCH A
COINCIDENCE.

...KNOWING
KIYOTAKA-
SAMA'S
GOOD
LUCK...

B
U
T
...



THERE'S
NO WAY
SOMETHING
SO RANDOM
WOULD
HAPPEN.

...T H E N...

...KIYOTAKA-SAMA'S
LITTLE
BROTHER
MIGHT HAVE
THE SAME
GOOD LUCK.



THE ONE-
MINUTE
MARK....

...SHOULD
BE FAST
APPROACHING,
IF I'M NOT
MISTAKEN.



ZERO!!

CASI

14:30:00

W

3

2

1

4

5

6

SEVEN
SECONDS
TO GO...

.....!

TEN
SECONDS
LEFT.

I'M NOT
PRESS-
ING THAT
SWITCH NO
MATTER
WHAT.

JUST KEEP
QUIET AND
COUNT DOWN,
WOULD YOU?





SEVEN
SECONDS
TO GO...

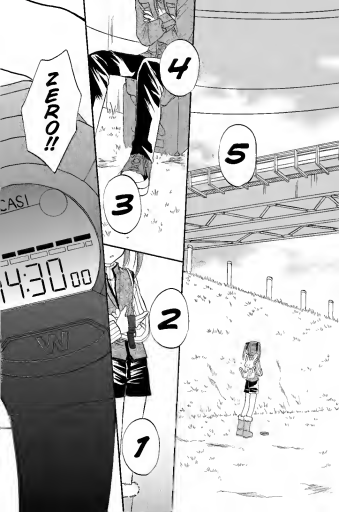
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.....!

TEN
SE-
CONDS
LEFT.

I'M
NOT
PRESS-
ING THAT
SWITCH NO
MATTER
WHAT.

JUST KEEP
QUIET AND
COUNT DOWN,
WOULD YOU?



NEWCOM

CASIO

14:30 00

W

4

3

2

1

5



.....

IT DIDN'T
EXPLODE.





MY CALCULATIONS
AND WILLPOWER
LOST TO MERE
CHANCE?



I DON'T
WANT TO
ACCEPT
THIS!
I CAN'T
...!!



DON'T
TELL ME
...!!







THEN
YOU GAVE
ME A WATCH
THAT'D BEEN
SET FORWARD
BY TWO
MINUTES...

...AND
MADE ME
COUNT
DOWN.

YOU
DID IT
SO I
WOULDN'T
KNOW
WHAT
TIME IT
WAS.

YOU
CONFUSED
ME WITH
ALL YOUR
CHATTER.

YOU
GAVE
THIS A
LOT OF
THOUGHT.



OF
COURSE
THE BOMB
WOULDN'T
GO OFF
WHEN THE
ALTERED
WATCH
REACHED
2:30.

YOU
PREPARED
ME FOR A
MALFUNCTION
SO I'D
FALL FOR
IT WHEN
THE TIME
CAME...

...AND
DROP THE
DEACTIVA-
TION SWITCH
IN SHOCK.



...AND
DEACTIVATE
THE BOMB.

YOU WERE
AIMING FOR
THAT AND
GOT QUIETLY
CLOSER...

...SO THAT
YOU COULD
SNATCH THE
SWITCH...

EVEN IF
I DIDN'T
DROP IT,
IT'D STILL
BE VERY
VULNERABLE.



BUT
...

...I
WIN!

I READ
YOUR
THOUGHTS
AND
WON!



BUT
STILL,
THAT
WAS
SOME
PLAN.

IT
WOULDN'T
SUCCEED
WITHOUT
GUTS OR
WIT.

YOU
REALLY ARE
AMAZING.



JUST
WHAT I'D
EXPECT
FROM
KYOTAKA-
SAMA'S
LITTLE
BROTHER.

POCHA
CLIP?

ポチャ

POCHA
CLIP?

AND
NOW...

...YOUR
FATE IS
SEALED.

ANY LAST
WORDS?





くら
くら
くら

NOW
THERE'S
REALLY
JUST ONE
MINUTE
LEFT.

THAT
SO...?



あ
あ
あ



.....



GUESS
ALL I CAN
DO NOW
IS PRAY.

"DEAR
GOD..."

"...PLEASE
SAVE THIS
HELPLESS
SOUL!"



HMM...
I WONDER
ABOUT
THAT...



THERE IS
NO GOD.



!?





MY
PRAYERS
HAVE BEEN
ANSWERED.



**NARUMI-
SAN!**





Alleluia!





NIRO
OPRINO

にろ
おのり



BUT
I DID THE
BEST I
COULD.

I'M SURE
IF IT WERE
MY BROTH-
ER, HE'D
WIN IN A
FAR MORE
STYLISH
WAY.



*In any
case,
I...*

*...have no
intention of
trying this
ever again.*



**CHAPTER
TWENTY-ONE
GOOD-
NIGHT,
SWEET-
HEART**





IF HE
KNEW I'D BE
AT SHIMARI
STATION...



...WHY DIDN'T
HE JUST TELL
YOU TO STAY
ON UNTIL THE
NEXT STATION?



...SINCE
IT'S ALREADY
SETTLED, YOU'RE
NOT GONNA TRY
APPREHENDING
ME NOW,
RIGHT?



HE DID,
BUT...



HMM...



AND I'M A
MEAN GUY WHO
DOESN'T KEEP
PROMISES.



I'M A
SORE
LOSER.



BUT
RIO-SAN'S
DIFFERENT,
RIGHT?



IF RIO
ADMITTED
DEFEAT...

...THEN
THE SAME
GOES FOR ME,
NO MATTER
WHAT I DO.



.....



YOU'RE
RIGHT.



I LOST.



DON'T
MAKE
THAT
FACE.



IF IT WAS
A MATTER
OF MERIT,
YOU'D COME
OUT ON
TOP.



IF I CAN
RUN AWAY,
I WILL.

AND
I DON'T HAVE
AN OUNCE OF
FAITH IN MY
ABILITIES.

I DIDN'T
STAKE MY
LIFE ON WILL-
POWER OR
PRIDE.

I'M A COWARD
WHO'S ALWAYS
ON THE LOOK-
OUT FOR A
SAFE HAVEN.



I'M
PATHETIC.

SEE...

I DON'T
EVEN
HAVE THE
STRENGTH
TO GET
UP.

...EVEN NOW
I CAN'T STOP
SHAKING.

WHAT...

IT'S
BECAUSE
YOU'RE
STRONGER
THAN ME
THAT
YOU'RE
ALIVE
NOW!!

IT WAS NO
COINCIDENCE
OR MIRACLE!

WHAT
ARE YOU
SAYING!?









THE WAY
YOU READ
ME WAS
AMAZING.

...YOU
PROVED—
WITHOUT A
SHADOW OF
A DOUBT—
THAT I'M A
PATHETIC
LOSER.



I HAVEN'T
GROWN AT
ALL SINCE
THEN.



...YOU
THOUGHT
I WAS JUST
LIKE MY
BROTHER.

BUT
YOU...



I'M
SUCH A
COWARD...

...BECAUSE
THAT WAS
THE SAFEST
AND MOST
RELIABLE
WAY...



IF YOU
THINK ABOUT
IT...IN THIS CASE
TOO, YOU WERE
ABLE TO EASILY
PREDICT THE
WAY THE KEY
WOULD BE
DELIVERED.



SO YOU
WERE IN A
STATE OF
CONFUSION
...

YOU
THOUGHT
I'D MAKE A
RECKLESS
BET LIKE MY
BROTHER
WOULD...

...AND
STILL CAME
OUT ON TOP
IN THE END,
LIKE IT WAS
NATURAL.

...AND YOU
COULDN'T
READ THE
STRATEGY
THAT WAS
RIGHT IN
FRONT OF
YOU.



IF YOU'D
GIVEN IT
YOUR ALL,
I'D HAVE
LOST.

I JUST
GOT LUCKY.



UNDER
NORMAL
CONDITIONS,
THOUGH,
YOU'D HAVE
BEEN ABLE
TO.



I ONLY DID
THAT OUT OF
DESPERATION,
SO IT WOULDN'T
BE STOLEN.

...LIKE
MAILING
THE TAPES.

ESSENTIALLY,
MY ACTIONS
WERE ALL
OVER THE
BOARD...



ONLY LATER
DID I GET
TO THINKING
DESPERATELY
ENOUGH TO
COME UP WITH
SOMETHING.

I HAD
NO CONCEPT
OF HOW THE
GAME WOULD
GO.



WHAT
CONFUSED ME
WAS YOUR OWN
ABILITY, LITTLE
BROTHER.

*It wasn't
luck.*



AND I
KNOW HOW
HARD IT IS
TO STIFLE
THAT.

YOU
IGNORED
THE FEAR
THAT
HAD YOU
SHAKING.

SHAKING



PLEASE
DON'T...

...DENY THAT
COURAGE.



IF MY
BROTHER
WERE HERE
IN MY PLACE,
HE WOULDN'T
BE SHAKING.



...SMILING,
CALM, AND
COLLECTED?

UNTIL
THE VERY
LAST MOMENT,
WEREN'T YOU
JUST LIKE
KIYOTAKA-
SAMA...

OUR
FAITH
MIGHT
BE THE
ONLY
THAT
ALL

...WHERE KİYOTAKA, SAMAMA CANNOT...

THIS BOY CAN GO...

...IF IT
WERE MY
BROTHER











**HER
WOUND
IS WIDE
OPEN!!**







TELL ME
WHERE MY
BROTHER
IS.



...SHE'LL
STAY QUIET
ON THE
SUBJECT OF
THE BLADE
CHILDREN.

I DON'T
GIVE A DAMN
ABOUT WHO
OR WHAT
YOU ARE.



WHERE ARE
YOU GOING?



SORRY,
BUT I
DON'T
KNOW.



HE ONLY
CONTACTS
ME ONCE IN
A WHILE.




 DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
 OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR
 PUBLIC AFFAIRS

BYAH
17









IF YOU
LEAVE NOW,
I PROMISE
THAT LITTLE
GIRL WILL
ENDANGER
YOU NO
FURTHER.



.....
RIG
COMES!



WHAT
DID
YOU
SAY?



THAT'LL
BE MY
STARTING
POINT IN
TRACKING
DOWN THE
REST OF
YOU TOO!

UNLIKE WITH
ASAZUKI,
I HAVE
PROOF OF
THIS GIRL'S
CRIMES.

YOU
CAN ALSO
TAKE THE
TAPE WITH
YOU AS
INSUR-
ANCE.

**DON'T
MOCK
ME!**



WHAT'S
YOUR
POINT?



IF YOU DON'T
LAY OFF RIG,
THE POLICE
WILL FIND
OUT ABOUT
KYOTAKA'S
RELATIONSHIP
TO US.

DO YOU
ACTUALLY
THINK I'D
AGREE TO
A DEAL
LIKE
THAT?



IS IT REALLY
OKAY FOR THEM
TO KNOW THAT
KIYOTAKA'S BEEN
COOPERATING
WITH CRIMINALS
LIKE US?



I DON'T
CARE.

DEPENDING ON
YOUR ANSWER,
YOUR BROTHER
COULD EVEN
BECOME A
WANTED
FUGITIVE!



NARUMI-
SAN!



EVEN IF
YOU DON'T
CARE...



HE'S SO
GOOD THAT
EVEN IF THEY
PUT OUT A
SEARCH FOR
HIM, HE'D
MONOPOLIZE
ALL THEIR
TIME.

EVEN IF MY
BROTHER
TURNS THE
WORLD
AGAINST HIM,
HE'S THE TYPE
OF PERSON
WHO'LL STILL
COME OUT
ON TOP



!!

...I DO
BELIEVE
THERE'S
SOMEBODY
WHO WOULD
SUFFER FROM
THAT OUTCOME,
DON'T YOU?

**MY
SISTER!**

**LEAVE
NOW, AND
I SWEAR
I'LL KEEP
MY WORD.**

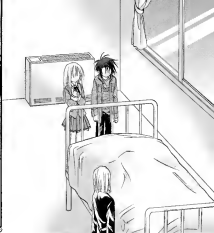
**I SWEAR...
IN THE NAME
OF KIYOTAKA
NARUMI.**



HE'S RIGHT...
IF MY BROTHER
WAS PURSUED BY
THE POLICE, MY
SISTER'D BE...



WIFE: GUND (SARINO)



SO THE
DEAL'S
BEEN
STRUCK.



JUST
HOW
FAR
ARE YOU
AND MY
BROTHER
PLANNING
ON TAKING
THIS?



RUTHERFORD!





...YOU'LL
MAKE RIO
HAPPY OR
SOMETHING?

DO YOU
THINK THAT
BY DOING
THAT...



DON'T
DELAY!



4
7
10
13



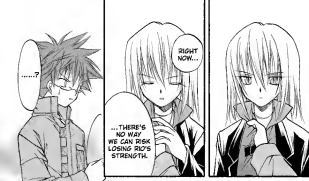
.....



HE'S A
BLEMISH
TO RIO'S
PRIDE!

DO
YOU
LOVE
RIO?

DON'T
YOU
GET
IT?





ALL OF
THE BLADE
CHILDREN
WILL BE
HUNTED.



THAT'S
RIGHT.

WE'VE
GOT TO GET
EVERYTHING
IN ORDER
QUICKLY...



...WE
MIGHT END
UP RELYING
ON NARUMI
JUNIOR'S
POWER...



T
H
A
T
...O
R...







LEMME
JUST CATCH
A COUPLE
WINKS.

I
HAVEN'T
SLEPT
IN TWO
WHOLE
DAYS.



...
*Narumi-
san.*



GOOD
WORK...



.....



SOME-
WHERE IN
ENGLAND



EYES...



...LET'S
FALL TO RUIN
TOGETHER...

**CHAPTER
TWENTY-TWO
DRY EYES**









...I'VE NEVER
ONCE BEEN
YOU CRY.

EVEN
THOUGH
WE'VE BEEN
FRIENDS
SINCE WE
WERE
LITTLE...



IT'S OKAY TO
HOLD BACK THE
TEARS ONCE IN
A WHILE...



...BUT
THEN...

...SOONER
OR LATER,
IT BECOMES
A HABIT.





...YOUR HEART
STOPS FEELING
ANYTHING
AT ALL.

AND
IN THE
END...



...BEING UNABLE
TO CRY DURING
HARD TIMES.

THERE'S
NOTHING
SADDER
THAN...

Cherry
100





...SO YOU
DON'T LOSE
SOMETHING
PRECIOUS...



...EVEN
IF YOU'RE
A BLADE
CHILD...



TEARS
WON'T
CHANGE
A THING.



BUT—

AND
BEYOND...

AND IN
ORDER TO
CONFRONT
THE FATE
BEFORE
ME...

...I
WOULD BE
BETTER OFF
BECOMING A
DEMON WHO
SHEDS
NEITHER
BLOOD NOR
TEARS.





LET'S GO,
KANON.



AS LONG
AS YOU'RE
WITH ME...

...I
WON'T LOSE
WHAT I HOLD
DEAREST.



EVEN IN
THE DARKNESS,
IF WE'RE TOGETHER,
WE CAN MOVE
FORWARD WITHOUT
LOSING OUR WAY.

WHAT
...

...WHAT'S
THE MATTER,
RUTHER-
FORD?



IT'S
NOTHING.

...NOTHING.



SO...

...WHEN'S
HE COMING?



NOT FOR
ANOTHER
MONTH OR
MORE.

AND WE
SHOULDN'T
GO RUSHING
HER UNTIL
SHE'S READY
ANYWAY.

WHEN
DOES RIG GET
OUT OF THE
HOSPITAL?





LABEL: DRIED SARDINE SNACKS /
TONS OF CALCIUM!



SPIN: ARIKAWA CHUNSHO ARIKAWA



...ARE
"THOSE"
KINDS OF
DAYS?

JUST
WHAT
KIND OF
DAYS...



THAT
REMINDS
ME...HE
ALSO...





THE BOY CAN HEAR FROM THE BOSS OF PATRASCH





TONIGHT'S
DINNER
MENU'S
MORE
PRESSING
RIGHT
NOW.

I THINK
IT'S A
MOVING
STORY,
BUT...

...IT'S NOT
WORTH
CRYING
OVER.



YOU
OGRE!

DEMON!!

NARUMI-
SAN,
YOU'RE
SO
HEART-
LESS!!



BUT IT'S
JUST PLAIN
STRANGE TO
NOT CRY AFTER
WATCHING
A DOG OF
FLANDERS!

THAT'S
MY
CALL!!

DON'T GO
CALLING ME
NAMES!

BEOW
(TALAP)

MAYBE
IT'S 'COS I'M
NOT THAT
WEAK...

...OR
MAYBE MY
HEART'S
GONE
COLD...

A hand is shown holding a small card or photograph. The card features a black and white portrait of a person with dark hair, wearing a light-colored shirt. The hand is positioned at the bottom right of the card, with fingers visible. The background of the card is light and textured.

MAYBE
IT'S 'COS I'M
NOT THAT
WEAK...

...OR
MAYBE MY
HEART'S
GONE
COLD...

A hand is shown holding a card that features a small, stylized illustration of a person's face. The card is being held up, and the hand is positioned at the bottom right of the frame. The background of the entire page is a repeating pattern of the word "LOVE" in a decorative, outlined font.

THAT REMINDS
ME, I CAN'T EVEN
REMEMBER THE
LAST TIME
I CRIED.

MAN,
SHE'S
SO AN-
NOYING.

EITHER
WAY...

...I'M
SURE IT'S MY
BROTHER'S
FAULT.

EITHER
WAY...

...I'M
SURE IT'S MY
BROTHER'S
FAULT.

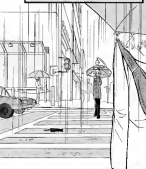






THERE'S
NOTHING
SADDER
THAN...

...BEING
UNABLE
TO CRY
DURING
HARD
TIMES.



I'M INCAPABLE OF BEING SAD...



I WANT TO
HEAR YOUR
FINAL
ANSWER.



THAT
YOU,
KANON?



Eyes.



OR A
CONFUSED
"RESCUER"?

WILL YOU
BECOME A
"HUNTER"
TOO?



I'M
GOING
TO STOP
YOU.

...
KANON.

I
SWEAR
IT.

SO WE
REALLY ARE
ENEMIES,
THEN, IS
THAT IT?





WHEN DID I STOP LETTING THE TEARS FLOW?



THEY'RE
SO DRY I
DON'T EVEN
FEEL THE
SHADOW OF
A TEAR.



THIS
IS A BIG
DEAL....



...EVEN
WHEN YOU TOLD
ME YOU'RE MY
ENEMY NOW...

LEMON...



RATEL
COLLARD



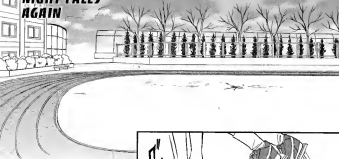
SHISHA
(COURTESY)



...ONLY TO
FALL TO RUIN
AS A "HELPLESS
BLADE CHILD."

...I DIDN'T
THROW AWAY
MY TEARS...

**CHAPTER
TWENTY-THREE
NIGHT FALLS
AGAIN**



**CHAPTER
TWENTY-
THREE
NIGHT
FALLS
AGAIN**





TAKAMACHI-
SENPAI!



SURE!

LET'S
GO IN
SOON!



AFTER
I RUN ONE
MORE LAP!



...WILL
I GET TO
STAY LIKE
THIS...?

HOW MUCH
LONGER...



SHU (SHUUKU) (PWA) SHUUKU



THAT'S
DANGER-
OUS!!

DON'T
DO WEIRD
STUFF TO
ME WHILE
I'VE GOT A
BUTCHER
KNIFE IN
MY HAND!



DWAH!



...GUN!



ARE YOU
HAPPY?

I FIGURED I
SHOULD EAT
DINNER WITH
MY ADORABLE
LITTLE BROTHER
ONCE IN A
WHILE, SO I
HURRIED
HOME!

うふふ
うふふ
うふふ



AND
ANYWAY,
S/S...

...WEREN'T
YOU
SUPPOSED
TO BE LATE
TODAY?



T—!

QUIT
THINKING
ABOUT TRIVIAL
STUFF AND
FOCUS ON
YOUR WORK.





...IS
BECAUSE
IT JUST SO
HAPPENS
I WAS
WORRIED
ABOUT
YOU.

THE
REASON
I CAME
HOME SO
FAST...



YOU HAVEN'T
BEEN ACTING
LIKE YOURSELF
LATELY.



I AM ACTING
LIKE MYSELF.

IF ANYTHING'S
HAPPENED, HOW
ABOUT YOU TRY
TALKING TO ME
ABOUT IT?







I AM
ONE OF
THE
CHILDREN
AFTER
ALL...



I CAN'T
HOPE FOR
A BRIGHT
FUTURE...
RIGHT?



...RYOUKO.

LOOKS
LIKE YOU'RE
FAMOUS IN
THE TRACK
AND FIELD
WORLD...







A "HUNTER"
WILL SOON
BE ENTERING
TSUKIOMI
HIGH.



.....



.....



...AS A
FELLOW
BLADE
CHILD.

TO TAKE
HIM ON, WE
NEED YOUR
POWER....





...THAT
I'M IN
DEEP WITH
THE BLADE
CHILDREN.

JUST
AS I'D
EXPECTED,
SHE'S
SNIPPED
OUT.



and
CHIKA
COUSIN?



IS IT REALLY
OKAY FOR THEM
TO KNOW THAT
KIYOTAKA'S BEEN
COOPERATING
WITH CRIMINALS
LIKE US?



THERE'S
NO WAY I CAN
TELL HER!!

7!!
RUBU
COUSIN?



*BUT
THEN NO
MATTER
WHAT I DO,
IT'LL ONLY
WORRY MY
SIS...!*



*SO CUT
THE CRAP
AND GET
TO THE
POINT.*

I WON'T
GET IN
YOUR
WAY.

IT'S MORE
THAN OBVIOUS
THAT YOU'RE
HIDING SOME-
THING.

DIDN'T I
TELL YOU TO
KEEP ME OUT
OF IT IN
EXCHANGE?

I DON'T
HAVE ANY
OBLIGATION
TO PROTECT
THEM.

IT'S NONE OF
MY BUSINESS
WHETHER THE
OTHERS ARE
GOING TO BE
"HUNTED."

DIAM
ISLAND

**YOU'RE
THE ONLY
ONE I HAVE
NO DESIRE
TO TEAM UP
WITH!**

**BUT
YOU'RE
ALSO ONE
OF THE
TARGETS.**

**IT WOULD
BE MORE
EFFICIENT
TO WORK
TOGETHER.**

**I'LL
NEVER
FORGIVE
YOU OR
KIYOTAKA!!**

**IF IT WASN'T
FOR YOU...**

**...KOU-
SUKE...**

...HAVE
TURNED
INTO A COLD-
BLOODED
KILLER.



...YOU
OUGHT TO
KNOW.....

.....!

ROBU
CLAPP

ほす
す



...THAT,
AS BLADE
CHILDREN,
OUR HANDS
ARE DESTINED
TO BE STAINED
WITH BLOOD.

AND NO
MATTER
HOW FAST
YOU CAN
RUN...

...YOU CAN'T
DREAM OF A
FUTURE.

RYOUKO.
WE
NEED YOUR
STRENGTH.



NO MATTER
WHAT YOU TELL
ME, I WON'T BE
SURPRISED OR
ATTACK YOU.



LEND
US A
HAND.



SO
TALK.



LET'S
PLAY A
LITTLE
GAME.

HOW
ABOUT
WE PLAY
A GAME?





IF
YOU WIN,
I'LL COOP-
ERATE WITH
YOU.



IF
YOU WIN,
I WON'T
ASK YOU
ANY MORE
QUESTIONS.



...I
NEVER
WANT TO
SEE THAT
APATHETIC
FACE OF
YOURS
AROUND
HERE
AGAIN!



BUT IF
I WIN...



...YOU'LL
TELL ME
EVERYTHING
THAT'S HAP-
PENED SO
FAR.



IN
EXCHANGE,
IF I WIN...





...FINE.



I ACCEPT...

...YOUR
CHALLENGE.

**CHAPTER
TWENTY-
FOUR
MOVING
TARGET**





RYOUKO.

JUST
WHAT KIND
OF GAME ARE
YOU PLAYING
HERE?



I DETEST
SILLY, LITTLE
MIND GAMES.



THIS IS
A PRETTY
POPULAR
GAME IN MY
ATHLETIC
CLUB.



LET'S
GO WITH A
SIMPLE TEST
OF REFLEXES.



WE WAGER
FOR THINGS
LIKE JUICE, BUT
IT GETS PRETTY
INTENSE.



KUANE
(SQUEAK)

IT'S A RUBBER
BALL KIDS USE
FOR PLAYING
BASEBALL
AND STUFF.



...IS
IT SOME-
THING THE
ENGLAND-
BRED YOUNG
MASTER
HASN'T
SEEN
BEFORE?





SPIN. SPIN (TIMP) SPIN





LET ME
EXPLAIN THE
RULES.



OKAY,
RUTHER-
FORD?



BUT IF
NONE OF
THEM DO,
YOU LOSE.



YOU'RE
GONNA
THROW
THOSE
THREE
BALLS
FROM
THERE...

....AND
IF ANY ONE
OF THEM
HITS ME,
YOU WIN.



YOU
CAN KEEP
THROWING
THEM WITH-
OUT GIVING
ME A BREAK
OR TIME TO
RECOVER.

IF YOU'RE
ABLE, YOU
CAN THROW
ALL THREE
AT ONCE.



YOU DON'T
NECESSARILY
HAVE TO THROW
ONE BALL AT
A TIME.



...IF THE
BALL
TOUCHES
THE GROUND
BEFORE
HITTING ME,
IT DOESN'T
COUNT.

ONLY...



IF I COULDN'T,
IT WOULDN'T BE
VERY MUCH FUN,
NOW WOULD IT?

AND,
OF COURSE,
I CAN AVOID
THE BALLS
YOU THROW
AT ME.



KEEP THAT
IN MIND...

...AND
TRY
TO HIT
ME...

...WITH
JUST ONE
BALL.



I HAVE
CONFIDENCE
IN MY
DYNAMIC
VISION...

...AND MY
EXPLOSIVE
REFLEXES.



THIS IS
HOW WE
ALWAYS
DO IT.



ALSO...

...YOU
CAN STEP
FORWARD A
LITTLE BUT
MAINTAIN
THIS MUCH
DISTANCE.



SIMPLE,
RIGHT?

THE
GAME'S
ABOUT
BRINGING
A MOVING
TARGET DOWN
IN THREE
TRIES.





NOT EVEN
THE ACE FAMED
FOR HIS MEGA-
FASTBALL IN THE
KOUHIEIN
CLASS.

EVERY
MEMBER
OF THE
SCHOOL
BASEBALL
TEAM'S
TRIED IT,
BUT...

YOU
SHOULD
ALSO
KNOW
I'VE
NEVER
LOST
AT
THIS
GAME.

...NO
ONE'S
BEEN
ABLE TO
TOUGH
ME.



...IS
PROBABLY
BECAUSE
THEY DIDN'T
UNDERSTAND
THE ESSENCE
OF THE
GAME.

THE
REASON THEY
COULDN'T GET
YOU...



AND
YOU'RE
SAYING
YOU
DO?

...HUH.

THIS IS
NO SIMPLE
GAME OF
TARGET
PRACTICE.

THAT'S
RIGHT.

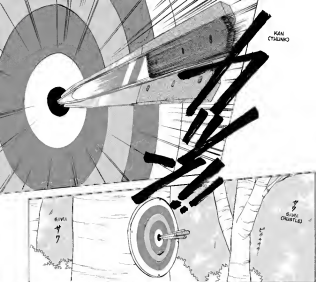
...IT'S
LIKE CHESS,
IN THAT IT
CALLS ON A
PERSON'S
INGENUITY
AND JUDG-
MENT.

RATHER

...I DO KNOW
HOW TO PUT
SOMEONE IN
CHECK.

I'M NOT
VERY
FAMILIAR
WITH BALL
GAMES,
BUT...

ME
(GASPS)



KAN
(TAILING)

SPY: PITCHING (CARRY)



WELL,
IT IS A
FIXED
TARGET
AFTER
ALL.



YOU'VE
HIT THE
BULL'S-EYE
EVERY
TIME...

...KANON.



...YOU
CAN'T HIT
A MOVING
TARGET
EITHER,
RIGHT?

BUT IF YOU
CAN'T HIT A
FIXED TARGET...



IF
YOU'D JUST
PRACTICE,
YOU COULD
DO IT WITH
YOUR EYES
CLOSED.



THAT'S
NOT
SO.



...THE
WAY YOU
TAKE AIM
CHANGES
EVERY-
THING.

WITH
MOVING
TARGETS...



...WITHOUT A
FIRST-CLASS
MARKSMAN
BEHIND IT,
HITTING A
MOVING TARGET
IS STILL HIGH
IMPOSSIBLE.

EVEN
WITH A
RIFLE THAT
HAS HIGH-
FIDELITY
ALIGNMENT
...



BUT THE
RESULT
WAS A
MESS.

EVEN AT
A HEASLEY FIVE
METERS AWAY,
THE WILD RABBITS
GAVE ME THE SLIP
EVEN THOUGH I
HAD PLENTY OF
CHANCES.



ONCE
I GOT MY
MOTHER...

...TO TAKE ME
HUNTING WHEN
I PROVED THAT
I COULD HIT A
STATIONARY
TARGET.



REMEMBER
THIS...

...EYES.



I COULDN'T EVEN
ATTEMPT TO GO
AFTER BIRDS.



...STOPPING
A MOVING
TARGET WITH ONLY
THE STRENGTH OF
YOUR TOOLS AND
YOUR SKILL ISN'T
ENOUGH.

NO
MATTER
HOW MUCH
YOU TRAIN
...



...YOU
HAVE TO
READ THE
TARGET'S
THOUGHTS...

HITTING IT
TAKES MORE
THAN JUST
TOOLS AND
SKILL...

...AND
HAVE THE
INGENUITY TO
LAY A TRAP
FOR IT.



...I
SEE.

I COULD
GO SO
FAR AS
TO SAY THAT...

...EVEN IF
YOU DON'T
HAVE THE
LUXURY OF
TOOLS, YOU
CAN STILL
KILL YOUR
TARGET.



JUST LIKE
IN CHESS.

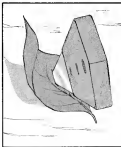




WELL....

HAIN
CTHUNKO

...NOTHING
BEATS
PRACTICE.





YOU
TAUGHT
ME MANY
THINGS...



...KANON.



.....



TYPICAL
RUTHER-
FORD.
HE'S NO
FOOL.



SO
IN THIS
...IT'S GAME...
NOT ABOUT
TRYING TO
THROW THE
BALL AT A
SPEED YOUR
OPPONENT
CAN'T DODGE.



...AS
LONG AS I
DON'T LOOK
AWAY OR
ANYTHING,
I SHOULD
BE ABLE TO
DODGE IT.

WITH A
WHOLE
EIGHT
METERS
BETWEEN
US...



THE
BALL
HE'S
USING
IS A
LIGHT
RUBBER
BALL.
NOT
EVEN A
PROFES-
SIONAL
PITCHER
COULD
THROW
IT ALL
THAT
FAST.



JUST
TARGET-
ING YOUR
OPPONENT
WON'T LAND
YOU ANY
HITS...EVEN
WITH THREE
BALLS.



WITH THE
FIRST TWO
BALLS,
YOU THINK
ABOUT HOW
TO THROW
OFF YOUR
OPPO-
NENT'S
BALANCE.

YOU
HAVE TO
CALCULATE
YOUR OPPO-
NENT'S
DODGING
TACTICS
AND WATCH
HER MOVE-
MENTS.



THE PRINCIPLE
IS TO PUT YOUR
OPPONENT IN A
POSITION WHERE
SHE CAN'T EVEN
DODGE A SLOW
BALL.

DEPENDING
ON THE
SERIES OF
ATTACKS,
YOU CAN
TRIP HER
UP...



YOU
AIM
FOR
THE
LEGS.

THE
FIRST TWO
BALLS ARE
PRACTICALLY
THROW-
AWAYS.

...AND
GET HER
TO STAND
STILL FOR
A MOMENT.



YOU
BREAK YOUR
ENEMY'S
ATTENTION
AND THROW
ONE AFTER
ANOTHER.

YOU
CAN'T
ACTUALLY
EXPECT
TO HIT HER
FROM THE
GET-GO.



THAT'S
WHEN YOU
NAIL HER
WITH THE
THIRD BALL.



...AND
HOW YOU
BRING ABOUT A
SITUATION WHERE
SHE CAN'T DODGE
THE THIRD BALL
IS WHAT THIS
CHALLENGE IS
ALL ABOUT.

HOW YOU
WASTE
THOSE
TWO BALLS
TO HIT
HER...

THAT'S THE
ESSENCE
OF THIS
GAME.

...IT
DOESN'T
MATTER
HOW YOU
SACRIFICE
THE PAWNS.

IF YOU
CAN JUST
KILL THE
ENEMY KING
AT THE
END...

JUST
LIKE IN
CHESS...

AND,
OF COURSE,
BOTH THE
CONTROL TO
THROW THE BALL
WHERE YOU'RE
AIMING AND THE
REFLEXES TO
IMMEDIATELY
EXECUTE THE
SECOND AND
THIRD THROWS
ARE NECESSARY

TO BE
ABLE TO
DECIDE HOW
TO CHANGE
THE AIM OF
YOUR SECOND
BALL ON THE
FLY—HAVING
OBSERVED HOW
SHE DODGED
THE FIRST BALL—
IS ALSO IMPOR-
TANT.

...ACTUALLY
UTILIZES
INGENUITY,
JUDGMENT,
AND PHYSICAL
PROWESS...

...MAKING
FOR A
PRETTY
TOUGH
CHALLENGE.

THIS
GAME
...



IT'S
JUST AS
TOUGH
FOR ME.

AND
OF COURSE
THE REFLEXES
AND EXPLO-
SIVE SPEED TO
DODGE BALLS
SUDDENLY FLY-
ING AT YOU
ALL AT ONCE...
AS WELL AS
KEEPING YOUR
FOCUS UNTIL
THE THIRD BALL
AND JUDGING
HOW YOU'LL
PARRY IT...IS
ESSENTIAL.



THE PERSON
FACING THE
PITCHER AND
DODGING THE
BALLS...

...ALSO HAS
TO READ HIS
ARM AND THINK
ABOUT HOW
TO AVOID THE
BALLS WITHOUT
LOSING HER
BALANCE.



...HE'S NOT
GOING TO WIN
AGAINST ME.

BUT...





HOW'S
HE SETTING
UP HIS
PITCH?

I'M GONNA
DODGE THOSE
BALLS UNTIL
THE THIRD AND
FINAL ONE!



I'M
READY!

COME
AT ME
ANYTIME!



BEFORE
I THROW IT,
I'LL TELL
YOU ONE
THING.



RYOUKO.



THROWING
THE FIRST
TWO BALLS
JUST TO
MAKE YOU
LOSE YOUR
BALANCE...

...AND THEN
MAKING THE
FINAL BLOW
WITH THE
THIRD BALL
ISN'T GOING
TO BE MY
TACTIC.



YEAH,
WHAT
IS IT?



WELL,
THEN...

WHAT ARE
YOU GOING
TO DO?



THIS IS MY PREDICTION.



**THE
FIRST
BALL.**

SA
CLIP



**I'LL GET
YOU WITH
THIS FIRST
BALL.**

**CHAPTER
TWENTY-FIVE
LIKE A SWAN**

*THIS IS MY
PREDICTION.*

*THE
FIRST
BALL.*

*I'LL GET
YOU WITH
THIS FIRST
BALL.*



CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE
LIKE A SWAN





KUH...!

WHAT'S
HE TRYING
TO PULL?



THAT
JUST SOME
LAME-ASS
BLUFF!?

NOW,
THEN...

...SHALL WE
START THE
GAME?



SH
(CRACK)



BAR
(CRACK)

*HOW
LIKE YOU,
RUTHER-
FORD!*

*THIS IS
A WHOLE
DIFFERENT
KIND OF
PRESSURE!*

.....!





IT'S WITH
THAT SPIRIT
OF HIS THAT
HE LAYS HIS
ENEMIES TO
WASTE.



IF I
GET DIS-
TRACTED,
I'LL
LOSE.



CALM
DOWN...



I'LL
READ HIS
STRATEGY
...!!



AND
YET HE
MADE
THAT
BIZARRE
PREDIC-
TION.

THE
FIRST
BALL.

I'LL GET
YOU WITH
THIS FIRST
BALL.



NO
MATTER
HOW HE
THROWS
THAT FIRST
BALL,
THERE'S
NO WAY IT'S
HITTING
ME.

THAT'S
THE
THEORY
OF THIS
GAME.



I GOT
IT!!



BUT
WHY
...?



HE COULD
TOSS THE
FIRST BALL
STRAIGHT
UP.



...WILL
DRAW MY GAZE
UPWARD AS MY
EYES FOLLOW IT
REFLEXIVELY

THEN
THE BALL
THAT I'M
SO WARY
OF...



IT'LL
ONLY BE
FOR A
SECOND,
BUT...

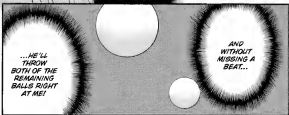
...
RUTHER-
FORD'LL
HAVE ME
IN HIS
TRAP BY
DISTRACTING
MY FOCUS.



HE
MEANS
TO MAKE
ME MORE
AWARE OF
THAT FIRST
BALL THAN
NECESSARY

...

...SO
ALL MY
FOCUS'LL
BE ON
IT!!



...HE'LL
THROW
BOTH OF THE
REMAINING
BALLS RIGHT
AT ME!

AND
WITHOUT
MISSING A
BEAT...

IT'S
ALSO
EASY TO
THROW
OVER-
HAND
THOUGH

IT HAS
ALMOST NO
NEGATIVE
EFFECT
ON HIS
PITCHING
FORM...

...AND
MINIMIZES
HIS
CHANCES OF
SCREWING
UP THE
SECOND
SHOT.

NOT TO
MENTION HE'S
A PIANIST WHO
CAN MANIPULATE
A KEYBOARD
FREELY WITH
BOTH HANDS.

IT
WOULDN'T
BE A BIG
STRETCH TO
ASSUME HE'S
AMBIDEX-
TROUS.

HE SHOULD BE
ABLE TO THROW
THE BALL WITH
EITHER HIS
RIGHT OR LEFT
HAND.

WITH
THE USUAL
FORM, IT TAKES
SOME TIME FOR
THE THROWER
TO PREP FOR
THE SECOND
BALL... BUT...

...
WITH
THAT
SET-
UP...

ATKIN
MAKES A
THROW
OF A SLIGHT
FRONTAL
BLOOM WITH
A TOUCH OF
HIS FINGER...

...
LIFE TAPPING
ATONING, HEIN
WIND THE BALL
UNDERMINE.



AND
IN THAT
INSTANT,
THE SPEED
WILL BE
FATAL
FOR ME.

...HE
CAN THROW
THE SECOND
IN NO TIME.



SO...
RIGHT AFTER
HE THROWS
ONE BALL
WITH HIS
RIGHT...



...EVEN IF
I EVADE THE
SECOND BALL,
THAT WON'T BE
THE END OF IT.

FURTHER-
MORE...



EVEN THOUGH
HE THROWS THE
THIRD BALL...

...HE
STILL
HAS THE
FIRST
BALL
THAT WILL
END THE
GAME...
IN HIS
HAND!!

SO,
ACCORDING
TO THE
RULES, HE
CAN STILL
USE IT.



THE FIRST
BALL HE
THROWS
INTO THE
AIR WON'T
HIT THE
GROUND...



...AND WILL
INSTEAD
FALL RIGHT
BACK INTO
HIS HAND.





SO THE
FINAL BALL
HE THROWS
HAS A GOOD
CHANCE OF
HITTING ME.



...IT'LL
INEVITABLY
THROW
ME OFF-
BALANCE.

ASSUMING
I EVADE THE
SECOND
BALL...



HE CAN
USE ONE BALL
TO MAKE BOTH
A FEINT AND
FINISH ME!



I GET IT
NOW!

AN
IMPUDENT
STRATEGY
THAT SCREAMS
'RUTHER-
FORD!'

BECAUSE
IT'S CERTAIN
THAT THE FIRST
BALL HE THROWS
WILL BE THE ONE
TO HIT ME.

HE
MIGHTY
WENT
ARE



THAT'S HIS
SETUP.



...THERE'S
NO DOUBT
THAT'S HIS
STRATEGY.

EVEN IF I CAN
SEE THAT HE'S
GOT TWO BALLS
SECURE IN HIS
LEFT HAND...



EVEN IF
I'VE READ
INTO THIS,
I STILL NEED
TO FOCUS MY
CONCENTRA-
TION IF I'M
GOING TO
DODGE THEM
ALL.

IT
MIGHT
JUST BE
THE BEST
APPROACH.



...I'M
GOING TO
WIN!

BUT...

DU
COULD...

EVEN
THOUGH
IT WAS
MY GAME,
HE CAME
UP WITH A
STRATEGY.

I
ADMIRE
HIM.

COME ON,
RUTHER-
FORD!
I'LL
DODGE
WHATEVER
YOU THROW
MY WAY!

SWPA.



**CAN
YOU
REALLY
DO IT?**

**YOU'RE
OUT OF LUCK
TODAY.**





I
KNEW
IT!!







YOU
ASSUME
TOO MUCH,
RUTHER-
FORD.



NO
CORRECTION



YOU
DIDN'T
AVERT
YOUR
GAZE
ONE
BIT.

CAN'T GO
WASTING
YOUR
ENERGY,
RIGHT?



I'VE SEEN
THROUGH
YOUR WHOLE
PLAN.



.....



**CHECK-
MATE.**

...NO.



**YOU'RE
THE ONE
MAKING
TOO MANY
ASSUMP-
TIONS...**

...
BYOUND.









HOW WAS
HE ABLE
TO MAKE
SUCH A
DELICATE
THROW?

IF THE
LANDING
POINT HAD
BEEN OFF
BY A MERE
TEN CEN-
TIMETERS,
HE'D HAVE
MISSED!!



HE
THREW
IT AT A
SLIGHT
CURVE SO
IT WOULD
FALL DOWN
ON ME!?



HE
DIDN'T
THROW
THE BALL
STRAIGHT
UP.



THAT
WAS TOO
LUCKY TO BE
A FLUKE!!

I MEAN, AN
ATTACK FROM
ABOVE OF ALL
THINGS!!



HOW'D
YOU HIT
ME!?



STOP
SPOUTING
NON-
SENSE!



"NOTHING
BEATS
PRACTICE."



SOMEBODY
TOLD ME A
LONG TIME
AGO...



IS IT
REALLY...
HIS FIRST
TIME?

...FIRST
...?



SO YOU
SHOULDN'T
HAVE BEEN
ABLE TO
DO THIS
ON THE
FIRST TRY—

YOU DON'T
EVEN PLAY
BALL!

GASP!

AND IT'S ONLY
NATURAL I'D CHOOSE
SOMETHING I'M GOOD
AT, SOMETHING I WIN
AT A LOT.

HE
REGARDS
ME AS
SOMEONE
RELUCTANT
TO HELP
HIM.

KNOWING
ME, IT ISN'T
MUCH OF A
STRETCH TO
THINK THAT
I'D CHAL-
LENGE HIM.

COULD IT
BE THAT
HE...?

AND HE
PREDICTED
THAT I'D
CHALLENGE
HIM TO THIS
AND REACHED
HIS COUNTER-
ATTACK...?

COULD
IT BE HE
STUDIED
UP ON ME
BEFOREHAND
AND KNEW
ABOUT THIS
GAME...?

IT'S POSSIBLE.



...AND
GOT HIT BY
A SLOW BALL
FROM ABOVE
THAT WOULD
NORMALLY
BE SO EASY
TO AVOID.

BUT BY
DOING THAT,
I BECAME
THE IDEAL
CONTROLLED
TARGET...



SO I DIDN'T
FOLLOW THE
BALL THAT
HE THREW UP
AND STAYED
PERFECTLY
STILL.

I WAS
CERTAIN I'D
DECIPHERED
RUTHERFORD'S
STRATEGY.



EVEN MY
SUPPOSITIONS
WERE ALL A PART
OF HIS PLAN...



HE
USED A
MIND GAME
TO MAKE ME
A FIXED
TARGET!





HE ACCEPTED
THE CHALLENGE
WITHOUT EVEN
MAKING THAT
OBVIOUS!



...NO...

...THERE'S
NO DOUBT
THAT HE
PRACTICED
UNTIL HE
BLED!



I KNOW
HE MUST'VE
REALLY
PRACTICED
PITCHING
FOR THIS
...

SPIN GUN (GRIP)



...DANCING
IN THE PALM
OF HIS HAND
FROM THE
START?

WHAT
GIVES?!

WAS I
REALLY...



DIDN'T
YOU HURT
YOUR
PRECIOUS
FINGERS...

...WITH
ALL THE
PITCHING
PRACTICE?



YOU
SURE
WORKED
HARD...

...TO
WIN OVER
LITTLE OL'
ME.



DON'T SAY
THAT...

?

WTF...

*That's just
how much
you're worth
to me.*





... HE NEVER LETS ON ...

... CRAZY BENEATH THE WATER ...

... DAMMIT.

THIS GUY'S LIKE A SWAN.





EVEN IF
MY OPPO-
NENT'S A
"HUNTER"...

I WON'T
MURDER
ANYONE.

...IF
IT COMES
DOWN TO IT,
I'LL OPT
FOR BEING
KILLED.

...I
KNOW.

...EH?

THAT'S
WHY I
NEED
YOU.

...I WANT
YOU TO
STOP HIM
WITHOUT
KILLING
HIM IF AT
ALL POS-
SIBLE.

THIS
"HUNTER"







...
JUST
THIS
ONCE

...
I'LL
SYMPA-
THIZE
WITH
YOU.



**KANON...
I SWEAR
I'LL STOP
YOU!!**

THE SPIRAL OF FATE BEGINS TO PULSATE.



THEN, A CALLER ON FATE FINALLY ENTERS THE SCENE: KANON HILBERT!!



HE HAS DECIDED TO LIVE THE REMAINDER OF HIS LIFE AS A "HUNTER"...



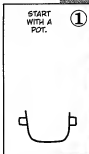
IN THE NEXT VOLUME, THE BEATING OF FATE INTENSIFIES!!

To be continued. Please wait!



Spiral work diary

—SONG FOR
DRAWING
AYUMU-
KUN—



*A FISH-CAMIED SEASPOOD PRODUCT FROM JAPAN WHICH IS SHAPED INTO A SMILEY AND STEAMED UNTIL FIRM. WHEN THE SOUP IS BLAZED, IT APPEARS SEASPOOD-SHAPED, LIKE AYUMU'S EYES AND NOSE.





SPIN, SWIRL, CRASH, SWIRL, SWIRL



AND BEFORE YOU KNOW IT, YOU HAVE AYUMU-KUN.

GRUN-STUFFED MILD SOUP



RAISE EYES, RAISE EYEBROWS, RAISE



RAISE, RAISE, RAISE, RAISE, RAISE



...RAISE THE EYES A LITTLE, PART THE HAIR ON THE RIGHT, GIVE HIM SIDEBURNS, AND HE'LL LOOK LIKE AYUMU-KUN.

THAT LEADS TO THE CONCLUSION

OKAY, PUTTING ALL JOKES ASIDE...

WELL, UNTIL THE NEXT VOLUME ...!



AFTERWORD WRITER'S

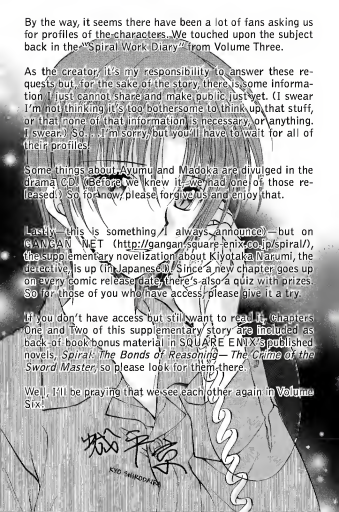
Due to how the page count worked out in Volume Four, I wasn't able to say, "HI," but this is Kyou Shirodaira! With the comic at a whole five volumes, it would make me so glad to know that all of you who are still following the story have been enjoying the plot so far.

As usual, having passed twenty chapters, the story's begun to take a huge turn, and both our appearing characters and atypical cohorts have increased. I plan for the two new characters introduced in this volume to be key players in the story from here on out. Especially Kanon Hilbert—he will be responsible for a lot that happens. Since there's no doubt that he will do his own crazy thing, ignoring the voice of the fans, I'm keeping my eye on him. But really, it's all very exciting to look forward to. Seems there'll be a lot of bloodshed coming up.

Charged with new and exciting characters, *Spiral* travels further and further away from being a strictly "mystery" manga, and I think I'd like it to continue in a more serious vein as "the heart is a mystery."

Also, I'm still doing the *Spiral* side story—*Spiral Alive*—that's serialized in *GANGAN WING* every other month.

If you're wondering how "side" the story is, almost none of the characters from *Spiral* appear (at most, only their names are mentioned). That's how much of a side story it is. For those of you who are perplexed and wonder just what's going on with it, please take a look at it.



By the way, it seems there have been a lot of fans asking us for profiles of the characters. We touched upon the subject back in the “Spiral Work Diary” from Volume Three.

As the creator, it’s my responsibility to answer these requests but, for the sake of the story, there is some information I just cannot share and make public just yet. (I swear I’m not thinking it’s too bothersome to think up that stuff, or that none of that information is necessary, or anything. I swear.) So... I’m sorry, but you’ll have to wait for all of their profiles!

Some things about Ayumu and Madoka are divulged in the drama CD. (Before we knew it, we had one of those released.) So for now, please forgive us and enjoy that.

Lastly—this is something I always announce—but on GANGAN NET (<http://gangan.square-enix.co.jp/spiral/>), the supplementary novelization about Kiyotaka Narumi, the detective, is up (in Japanese!). Since a new chapter goes up on every comic release date, there’s also a quiz with prizes. So for those of you who have access, please give it a try.

If you don’t have access but still want to read it, Chapters One and Two of this supplementary story are included as back-of-book bonus material in SQUARE ENIX’s published novels, *Spiral: The Bonds of Reasoning—The Crime of the Sword Master*, so please look for them there.

Well, I’ll be praying that we see each other again in Volume Six.

新井 隆
KYO SHINKOJIMA

Spiral 5

THE BONDS OF REASONING

omake!





SPIRAL

The Bonds of Reasoning ⑤

Kyo Shirodaira
Eita Mizuno

Translation: Christine Schilling

Lettering: Marshall Dillon and Terri Delgado

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

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